

Driving Delaware Roundabouts

Test drive one of our roundabouts and let us know what you think!



What is a roundabout?

For more information about roundabouts in Delaware:



Visit our Community Programs & Services – "Roundabout Awareness" page
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Delaware Department of Transportation

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Featuring:

- **Navigation Tips**
- **Roundabout Benefits**



A roundabout is a type of circular intersection, without stop signs or traffic lights.

Roundabouts operate using yield signs at each entrance, giving priority to the vehicles within the roundabout. Drivers enter, go counterclockwise around a center island, and then choose an exit.

Roundabouts can improve traffic flow, especially during off-peak periods when traffic is light. Traditional traffic signals usually stop two or more directions of traffic at one time. In roundabouts, all directions of traffic operate under yield control. Several Insurance Institute for Highway Safety studies report significantly-improved traffic flow and increased safety when intersections are converted to roundabouts.

Roundabouts are not traffic circles!

Today's roundabouts are not like traditional traffic circles, which are often large, high-speed intersections that require the vehicles traveling in the circle to stop or yield to those entering. This often results in congestion, as well as crashes. Roundabouts are typically smaller, have slower speeds and make entering vehicles yield to those already in the roundabout.



Navigating a roundabout

By understanding what a roundabout is and how it works, you will be able to travel through intersections easier and safer.

- When you approach the roundabout, slow down, look for, and yield to pedestrians and bicyclists.
- At the yield sign, look to the left and yield to traffic already in the roundabout. If there are no vehicles present, you may proceed without stopping.
- Look for guide signs to assist you in making the correct route choices.

- Motorists in the roundabout always have the right-of-way.
- When a gap in traffic appears, merge into the roundabout. A good rule of thumb is to "wait for the break."
- Stay in your lane as you continue to your exit.

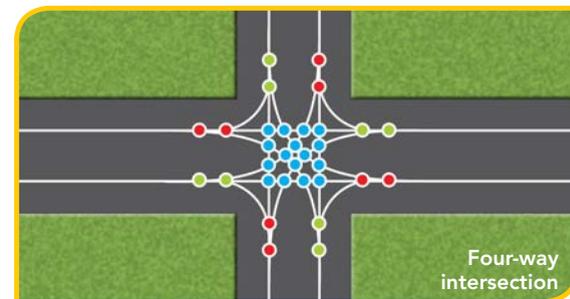
- If you want to turn right, just stay to the right
- To go straight, travel halfway around the roundabout
- To make a left turn, travel three quarters the way around the roundabout
- For u-turns, just travel all the way around the roundabout until you get back to the place you started

Why roundabouts?

Hundreds of communities throughout the United States are replacing regular intersections with roundabouts because they are often a safer way to move traffic.

Safer than traditional intersections

In a traditional four-way intersection, there are 32 points of conflict in which two vehicles may collide. Roundabouts have only eight conflict areas, greatly reducing the potential for crashes.



Drastically reduces severe crash injuries

The circulating movement of roundabouts nearly eliminates the potential for high-speed, right-angle, and left-turn/head-on collisions. Rear-end collisions are also reduced in roundabouts. Crashes in roundabouts are typically minor, translating into less severe injuries and property damage. National studies have shown roundabouts provide a:

- 90%** reduction in fatal crashes
- 75%** reduction in injury crashes
- 30-40%** reduction in pedestrian crashes
- 10%** reduction in bicycle crashes

Easier for beginning and senior drivers

Slower vehicle speeds mean drivers have more time to judge and react. This is especially important for beginning drivers and older drivers. A 2007 study by the University of Delaware looked at the needs of older drivers and recommended replacing conventional intersections with roundabouts, especially in areas where there are large populations of seniors.

Lower maintenance costs

Traffic signals are complex electrical systems which take significant time, staff, and funding to properly maintain and operate. The cost to maintain one traffic signal has been estimated at \$4,000 per year. Roundabouts do not include traffic signals but often have roadway lighting. Lighting systems typically have higher power costs but lower maintenance costs – overall typically less than \$1,000 per year at a roundabout. The service life of a roundabout is approximately 25 years, versus 10 to 20 years for traffic signals.



Did you know?

Roundabouts are designed with buses, large trucks, and farm equipment in mind. Large vehicles are encouraged to use the truck apron, a slightly raised area around the inner circle in the center of the roundabout, to help navigate wider turns. DeIDOT has developed design criteria specifically to accommodate oversized farm vehicles for rural roundabouts.

Good for the environment

Roundabouts can also help the environment. Many vehicles must wait for the light to turn green in a signalized intersection. While stopped, the vehicles' exhaust emit more pollutants and gases into the atmosphere. Since roundabouts often shorten or eliminate such stops and improve traffic flow, they also reduce vehicle emissions. Gasoline use is also reduced as traffic moves more efficiently through roundabouts. Studies have shown that fuel savings can be up to 30 percent in roundabouts.